

PHA 2015 CONFERENCE POSTER SESSION

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The Pennsylvania Historical Association sponsors a poster session at its annual meeting for undergraduate and graduate students to present their research as emerging scholars in the field of Pennsylvania and Mid-Atlantic history. Beginning this year, posters were divided between graduate and undergraduate levels with first, second, and third places at the undergraduate level.

At the Fall 2015 meeting held October 8–10 in Grantville, the following undergraduate and graduate posters were selected as the best in their categories. The first-place posters are reproduced on the following pages, along with their abstracts. A list of all entries and winners follows.

FIRST PLACE, GRADUATE

“Internationalizing the National Park Service (NPS): A Study of the NPS Division of International Affairs, 1956–1970”

Joana Arruda, Temple University

Faculty Sponsor: Hilary Iris Lowe

The United States National Park Service (NPS), founded in 1916 to conserve America’s natural and historic landscapes, established a Division of International Affairs (DIA) in 1961. The NPS, as scholars Lary Dilsaver and Terence Young explain, has always participated in international work in some capacity since its agency’s origins. I argue that this rich unexplored history of overseas engagement at the height of the DIA is a telling narrative of how the NPS contributed to the “containment through nation-building” phenomenon at the height of the Cold War era both at home and abroad.

The decision to create an office specifically dedicated to foreign engagement was directly related to the expansion of the Park Service at home following World War II. Relaxation of wartime travel restrictions and the creation of the national interstate highway system made national parks more accessible than ever before. Travel accessibility, in addition to the postwar economic boom and surge in nationalism, spurred a 30-million increase in visitors to national parks between 1941 and 1956. The parks, however, were unequipped to accommodate this unprecedented increase in visitation. Armed with a solution, NPS director Conrad “Connie” Wirth approached President Dwight Eisenhower’s cabinet in 1956 and proposed Mission 66, a ten-year initiative to completely expand the park system in time for the agency’s fiftieth anniversary in 1966. A Mission 66 pamphlet advertised, “The very idea behind the parks is America—that the country belongs to the people for the enrichment of all.” This expansive initiative was a physical and thereby ideological rebuilding of the American landscape to reflect its democratic and powerful postwar image on the world stage. Mission 66 was an example of nation-building at home.

As the NPS expanded its authority at home, the United States extended its powerful postwar image abroad. The Kennedy administration secured the passage of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which created initiatives such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to contain communism overseas through economic means. The formation of the NPS’s Division of International Affairs that same year converged with the United States’ larger mission to exert its influence internationally. It distributed pamphlets overseas that glorified American heritage and democratic values reflected in parks such as Yellowstone and Independence National Historical Park. In 1966 the DIA began its first official international project in Jordan, where twelve NPS employees were assigned to develop a Jordanian national park system at Jordan’s request. Using USAID funds, the NPS developed national parks to drive Jordan’s economy as a containment measure. The expansion of the NPS at home through Mission 66, argued Wirth, was necessary to remind Americans of the democratic values that the national parks represented. In many ways, the NPS’s project in Jordan was an extension of the ideological and economic models of Mission 66 to legitimize foreign nations in the American image.

Not only did the NPS participate in nation-building overseas, but it also invited foreigners to visit the United States to see for themselves the American way of life. In the 1960s, the Park Service developed the African

Student Program. It invited African students attending American universities to tour American national parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite. This program was developed to teach students about the democratic meanings and inherent universality of the national parks in the hopes that they would return home and champion national park development in their respective nations. The NPS, on the behalf of the United States, was demonstrating how to literally build democracy through a national park system.

These overseas projects were tied to the expansion of the NPS at home and the growth of American influence abroad. Tracing the DIA's involvement in this history is a vital piece to more fully understanding the agency's contributions to world development through national parks.

FIRST PLACE, UNDERGRADUATE

“‘Every Town Has . . . Half a Dozen Lunatics’: Insanity
in Snyder County, Pennsylvania”

Rachel Baer, Susquehanna University

Faculty Sponsor: Edward Slavishak

Between 1860 and 1904, court officers in Snyder County, Pennsylvania, identified fourteen residents as “lunatics” in county court records. These records, known as lunacy papers, detail the legal proceedings surrounding insanity. The papers naturally document the process of officially declaring a person insane and appointing a guardian. More importantly, however, they are heavily invested in the economics of insanity, including the financial accounts of insane persons, the payment of court fees, and the sale of estates and possessions. Those people declared insane, moreover, were often farmers or laborers or had close family members in these working-class professions. The intense focus on economics in these records emerged in the context of a period of transition in Snyder County's history. After Snyder County's boundaries were officially formed in 1855, the rural central Pennsylvania area experienced years of troubled growth until the early twentieth century, especially in transportation, agriculture, and industry. The region's briefly booming canal network was scrapped in favor of a railroad system, which then faced many failed attempts before it ultimately succeeded. Furthermore, agriculture was slowly expanding beyond the boundaries of the county and professionalizing via new modes

of transportation and farm organizations, while extractive industries such as lumber began to replace other forms of industry after the Civil War. Such an uncertain economic situation created an atmosphere conducive to exploitation of people from the lower classes—perhaps by declaring them lunatics in order to remove their ability to control their own finances and also sell their property. In Snyder County, relatives of the legally insane and other local residents could feasibly derive economic benefits from lunatics' loss of financial independence.

Through close study of these lunacy papers as well as newspapers, census records, and Pennsylvania lunacy laws, this project uncovers the social, cultural, and economic meanings of insanity in Snyder County. It also aims to add to the existing literature on insanity by studying the experiences of the insane poor in a predominately agricultural, rural area that lacked an insane asylum and almshouse. This project moreover challenges scholars who emphasize the marginalization of the insane, instead showing that those declared lunatics could become a beneficial part of life for both their immediate family members and the community at large.

ALL UNDERGRADUATE-LEVEL INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Rachel Baer, Susquehanna University, "Every Town Has . . . Half a Dozen Lunatics': Insanity in Snyder County, Pennsylvania" (first place)

Faculty Sponsor: Edward Slavishak

Marie Gorman, Lebanon Valley College, "LVC at War: Vietnam" (third place)

Faculty Sponsor: Rebecca McCoy

Erich Lenz, Kutztown University, "The Light Shines On: How America Preserves Its Historic Lighthouses"

Faculty Sponsor: Michael Gabriel

Taylor Mason and Devon Newcomer, Shippensburg University, "Inside These Walls: The Stewart Hall History Project" (second place)

Faculty Sponsor: Steven Burg

Jennifer Wendt, Susquehanna University, "How the Past Defines the Future: A Historiography on Maximilien Robespierre"

Faculty Sponsor: Edward Slavishak

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Faculty Sponsor: Rebecca McCoy

Marie Gorman, "LVC at War: Vietnam" (third place)

Cody Kelly, "This Ringing Song We Raise: Spirit, Song, and Passion of the LVC Music Department"

Brianna Leiter, "LVC's Presidents: 'Taking Courage for an Ever-Inspiring Future'"

Becky Sausser, "A Beginning Grounded in Religion"

Cody Stryker and Michael Mango-Puglisi, "LVC's Tradition of Athletics"

Jeannette Tropp, "Science on the Bunsen Burner"

ALL GRADUATE-LEVEL ENTRIES

Joana Arruda, Temple University, "Internationalizing the National Park Service (NPS): A Study of the NPS Division of International Affairs, 1956–1970" (winner)

Faculty Sponsor: Hilary Iris Lowe

Tiffany Dacheux, Millersville University, "'A Little of Most Things': The Intellectual World of Elizabeth Drinker"

Faculty Sponsor: Robyn Lily Davis

Grace DiAgostino, Temple University, "Selective Chinese Inclusion during an Era of Exclusion: American Unilateral View of Development and the Exhibit of a 'Native' Chinese Village at the National Export Exposition, 1899"

Faculty Sponsor: Hilary Iris Lowe

Michael Fitzpatrick, Millersville University, "The Northampton Insurrection: John Fries' Rebellion as America's Thermidorian Reaction, 1799–1800"

Faculty Sponsor: Robyn Lily Davis

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